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ABSTRACT

Ready to Learn is an outreach initiative designed to increase the potential of PBS children's television programs to teach children cognitive and social skills. The program funds workshops for parents and teachers, materials supplementing children's television programs, children's book distribution, and "PBS Families" and "PBS para la Familia" magazines. One hundred thirty-nine participating PBS member stations implement the Ready To Learn initiatives goals. This report describes the findings of a 2001 evaluation of Ready To Learn, which used a survey and site visits to document the activities conducted by 20 Ready To Learn stations and study outcomes for Coordinators, workshop participants, and the children in their care. Following an introductory chapter, Chapter 2 describes the surveyed sites, noting factors such as geographic region, urbanicity, license type, type of market, and station budget. Chapter 3 looks at Ready To Learn Coordinators educational background, skills, dedication, turnover, and professional development. Chapter 4 focuses on community partnerships with Ready To Learn types of partners, roles they play, and the nature of the relationships between the partners and Ready To Learn staff. Chapter 5 explores the nature of outreach workshops, who attended them, their content, their length, and how they were delivered. Chapter 6 describes outcomes that Coordinators expect from their programs, specifically, more parents reading to their children, teachers viewing television as a learning tool, and children developing a positive attitude toward reading and books. Chapter 7, the final chapter, provides lessons for stations, partnership and outreach. Recommendations include reducing Coordinator turnover, developing partnerships with multiple roles for partners, making workshops organized yet flexible, and focusing on outcomes when planning workshops. (Contains 12 tables and figures.) (KK)

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Policy Research, Inc.

Implementing Ready To Learn Outreach: Lessons from 20 Public Television Stations

April 1, 2002

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We gratefully acknowledge these contributions and accept sole responsibility for any remaining errors or omissions in the report.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Now in its sixth year, Ready To Learn has grown from an education and outreach initiative with 47 participating Public Broadcast Service (PBS) member stations in 1995, to one with 139 stations in November 2001. Ready To Learn was created in 1995 by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), the U.S. Department of Education, and the U.S. Congress. The outreach funded by Ready To Learn is intended to increase the potential of PBS children's television programs to enhance children's cognitive and social skills. Most of the outreach takes the form of workshops aimed at parents, child care providers, and teachers to show them how to extend children's learning by linking concepts from the PBS children's television programs to reading and other learning activities. Ready To Learn was intentionally designed to flexibly serve communities with diverse needs, and stations were given wide latitude in developing and implementing their outreach. As a result, there are as many forms of Ready To Learn programs as there are outreach Ready To Learn stations.

Under a new cooperative agreement, PBS contracted with Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (MPR) to design and conduct a comprehensive evaluation of Ready To Learn. The evaluation includes two components: (1) a process study to document the range of activities offered across Ready To Learn stations and to identify promising practices; and (2) an outcomes study, to examine how Coordinators, workshop participants, and the children in their care change over the course of the study period. As part of the process study, MPR conducted one-day site visits to 20 Ready To Learn stations, during which we extensively interviewed Ready To Learn and other station staff to learn more about how the program was implemented at each station.

From our site visits, we learned about how Ready To Learn fits within the stations, program staffing and professional development, types of partnerships and roles of partners, workshop delivery and content; as well as what Ready To Learn Coordinators, staff, and partners perceived to be the effects of the program on outreach recipients (parents, child care providers, teachers, and children). From these visits, we drew lessons for stations, partnerships, and outreach that could benefit PBS and Ready To Learn stations.

LESSONS FOR STATIONS

1. **Station Commitment Is Important.** Several Coordinators reported that Ready To Learn is only as strong as a station's commitment to carrying out the program's goals.

2. **Work to Reduce Coordinator Turnover.** Turnover among Coordinators was high. Although the reasons for turnover vary, stations can nevertheless work to reduce it by (1) keeping open the lines of communication with PBS's Ready To Learn Department, and (2) providing reliable assistance for Coordinators. Additional help could reduce the demand on Coordinators' time for clerical duties, which could, in turn decrease turnover.

LESSONS FOR PARTNERSHIPS

1. **Make the Development of Partnerships a Priority.** In many of the stations we visited, Coordinators identified their partnerships as important to accomplishing the outreach they did.

2. **Create Multiple Roles for Partners.** Coordinators who were the most satisfied with their partnerships have created a range of roles that partners could fill. Most had a mixture of formal and informal partnerships, and they allowed partner organizations to select the roles most comfortable for them.

3. **Extend Outreach Through Partnerships.** Other Coordinators stressed their belief that working through partners is an effective way to increase the number of people served. In addition, partnering was a popular way to recruit target populations for workshops; since, in many cases, partners had already established relationships with these groups.

LESSONS FOR OUTREACH

1. **Prepare, Yet Be Flexible When Conducting Workshops.** Coordinators told us that it helped them greatly to learn as much as possible about participants' needs and expectations before conducting a workshop. Even careful preparation, however, cannot anticipate all situations; another factor is being ready to change plans in response to participants' reactions.

2. **Organization Is Important.** Coordinators must manage diverse responsibilities with limited resources. Coordinators stressed that, to do their jobs well, organizational skills are important. Although different methods work for different people, Coordinators emphasized that it was important to ask for help when needed and to resist the idea that they have to know everything.

3. **Consider Hiring Facilitators or Arranging for Them Through Partnerships.** Coordinators could increase the number of workshops offered (which many wanted to do), by training more facilitators. Facilitators were instrumental in increasing the number of workshops stations could offer.

4. **Think About Outcomes.** Coordinators might increase the effectiveness of their workshops by thinking concretely about the changes they hope to achieve with parents, child care providers, teachers—and, ultimately, children. Thinking about desirable outcomes could help Coordinators, one, sharpen the focus of workshops, and, two, place optimal emphasis on specific components.

5. **Workshop Breadth Versus Depth.** Clear tensions within Ready To Learn are the competing desires to reach the greatest number of people possible (breadth), and to effect the most beneficial change in those who participate in workshops (depth). From our visits, we drew no clear recommendation. Most Coordinators offer as many workshops as they can—by giving relatively short, single sessions. Given the limited strength of the intervention, we would expect the changes that could occur among participants to be more diffuse and less dramatic than if participants were to attend longer sessions or sessions offered over time.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Now in its sixth year, Ready To Learn has grown from an education and outreach initiative with 47 participating Public Broadcast Service (PBS) member stations in 1995 to one with 139 stations in November 2001. Ready To Learn was created in 1995 by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), the U.S. Department of Education, and the U.S. Congress. It funds production of new PBS children's television programs and provides implementation funds to participating PBS member stations to help them provide outreach to encourage parents, teachers, and child care providers to use the television programs to encourage children's learning. In the original grant, PBS was a subcontractor to CPB; over time, PBS took on a larger role, including operational responsibilities for Ready To Learn. The initial five-year grant ended in March 2000, and a new five-year cooperative agreement between PBS and the Department of Education began in September of that year.

The outreach funded by Ready To Learn is intended to increase the potential of the PBS children's television programs to teach children cognitive and social skills. It takes the form of workshops aimed at parents, child care providers, and teachers, to show them how to extend the lessons in the television programs for children, using a model called the "learning triangle," or the View-Read-Do model. This model involves using program video clips to illustrate a concept, linking this concept to reading a children's book, and doing an activity—all with similar themes. In addition to the television programs and workshops, Ready To Learn promotes literacy in several other ways: (1) through materials created to accompany children's television programs, (2) through children's book distribution, and (3) through distributing *PBS Families* and *PBS para la Familia* magazines.

Participating PBS member stations agree to designate a Coordinator, broadcast a minimum of 6½ hours of PBS children's programming each weekday at times appropriate for the target audience, run PBS-produced educational video breaks ("interstitials") between television programs, conduct a minimum of 20 workshops each year, and distribute at least 300 children's books per month. Coordinators must also participate in at least 40 hours of

professional development training each year. PBS provides each station implementation funds and assists Coordinators' professional development by providing 20 hours of credit at the annual Ready To Learn Professional Development Seminar. In summer 2001, PBS also offered two training sessions (one on each U.S. coast) that provided 10 additional hours of professional development. In addition, Ready To Learn aims to build on family services already available in communities by requiring stations to form partnerships with organizations that serve families and promote literacy, such as Head Start and Even Start programs. The cooperative agreement also specifies four target populations that should be a focus of outreach efforts. The target populations are families with low literacy, (2) with limited English proficiency, (3) living in rural areas, and (4) with children with special needs.

Ready To Learn was designed to flexibly serve communities with diverse needs; stations were given wide latitude in developing and implementing their programs. As a result, there are as many different forms of Ready To Learn programs as there are Ready To Learn stations. And these programs are dynamic. They changed in response to (1) the expectations of station management, (2) the arrival of new Coordinators who shape the programs, and (3) the refinement of PBS requirements.

Evaluation Important from the Start

Evaluation has been a part of Ready To Learn since the initial grant. Under that grant, researchers from the University of Alabama evaluated the program (Bryant et al. 1999). Using a non-randomized comparison group design, the evaluation compared three conditions: (1) participation in a workshop, (2) receipt of mailed Ready To Learn materials, or (3) neither, in samples drawn from nine PBS stations (the stations were selected by PBS). The researchers obtained lists of people who had signed up for workshops, and worked from these lists to contact and interview people before the scheduled workshop. We have no information about how people in the mailing only condition were identified. The no-treatment condition was composed of people who had signed up for but not attended a workshop and a list frame sample of demographically matched people (to the workshop sign-up group) who lived in the same region (Jennings Bryant and Mary Maxwell, personal communication March 8, 2001).

The one-month follow-up surveys were completed by telephone, and the six-month follow-ups by mailed self-administered questionnaires. In short, the researchers reported that there were both short-term (one-month) and longer-term (six-month) positive effects of workshop attendance on adult-child co-viewing, household rules about television viewing for children, frequency of children's viewing educational programs, and reading to children. These effects were strongest for parents, and not as strong for child care providers, who, the researchers surmised, had less control over activities in structured child care settings (Bryant et al. 1999).

The Structure of the Current Evaluation

Continuing the emphasis on evaluation, PBS contracted with Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (MPR) to design and conduct a comprehensive evaluation of Ready To Learn under the new cooperative agreement. This evaluation includes two components: (1) a process study to document the range of activities conducted across Ready To Learn stations and identify promising practices; and (2) an outcomes study, to examine how Coordinators, workshop participants, and the children in their care change over the course of the study period.

We gathered data for the process study in several ways. As part of our documentation of change in Coordinators over time, in spring 2001, we conducted a baseline survey of Ready To Learn Coordinators (reported in Vogel et al. 2001). This was the first in a planned series of five surveys, with the first follow-up survey planned for December 2001, and annually thereafter. In summer 2001, we also conducted a set of site visits to 20 Ready To Learn stations around the country. These visits were a source of detailed information for the process study. We plan another set of visits to 10 stations in summer 2003, to assess the ways in which Ready To Learn changes over time. These visits will constitute the final piece of the process study, as well as form part of the outcomes study.

The Coordinator Survey Provided Valuable Information

From the baseline Coordinator survey, we were able to describe Ready To Learn programs nationally (Vogel et al. 2001). We learned that Ready To Learn stations varied, both in terms of the markets they served and in their revenues. Many stations served multiple market types simultaneously (that is, urban, suburban, and rural). Some were able to leverage hundreds of thousands of dollars for their Ready To Learn programs, while others worked within the limits of the $25,000 implementation funds from PBS. Nevertheless, many Coordinators reported that, with approximately four months remaining, they had already exceeded the required 20 workshops for the year. The rest were well on their way to meeting or exceeding that number. In addition, most Coordinators distributed children's books in excess of the required 300 per month.

Coordinators reported that the workshops they conducted, or that were conducted by facilitators, covered large geographic regions, with half traveling as many as 100 miles in order to conduct workshops. The workshops themselves were, most often, aimed at parents, and the majority were conducted in single sessions. The average length of a workshop was less than two hours (1 hour and 45 minutes). The workshops focused on language and literacy topics, using popular children's television programs, such as *Between the Lions* and *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood.* Most Coordinators reported that workshop participants were parents and center-based child care providers. Coordinators concentrated their outreach efforts on the low-literacy target population.

Perhaps most important, Coordinators are well educated, actively engaged in professional development, and mostly satisfied with their jobs. They expressed great enthusiasm for their work and were optimistic about the changes underway at the PBS Ready To Learn Department. Finally, they offered useful suggestions for improving the program.

This report describes 20 Ready To Learn stations as they were at the time of our visits in summer and early fall 2001. It describes how we selected the sites, what we learned about the ways in which stations structured Ready To Learn, the Coordinators and their professional development, the importance and roles of community partners, the form and content of the outreach, and anticipated outcomes—all as reported by Coordinators and other informants we spoke with during or after the visits. We conclude with a description of common themes and implementation lessons for PBS and future Ready To Learn stations. Where appropriate in this report, we note the ways in which our site visit findings compare with those from the baseline Coordinator survey. We report information about visited stations anonymously. They are labeled with letters of the alphabet when being compared directly in tables. Figure I.1 shows all the stations we visited.

Figure I.1

PBS Ready To Learn Stations*

*NOTE: The map shows Ready To Learn Stations in the continental U.S. as of November 2001. It excludes stations in Anchorage, Alaska, Barrigad, Guam, and two stations in Puerto Rico. Madison, Wisconsin has two Ready To Learn Stations.

CHAPTER II

DESCRIPTION OF 20 READY TO LEARN STATIONS

Our first task was to develop a rationale and methodology for selecting stations to visit. We nominated stations for visits with two aims in mind: (1) describe a representative range of programs, and (2) focus on sites that are implementing promising practices. The second aim led us to select stations purposively while ensuring that stations from all regions and market types, with varying outreach intensity, and primary workshop participants were represented. After we nominated the initial set of 20 stations, we negotiated with PBS for final approval of the sites. In several cases, alternate sites were visited because the original station was unable to participate in a site visit. The following section describes the selection process in detail.

Methods for Selecting Stations

We took four factors into account in choosing stations to visit: (1) geographic region (Northeast, South, Midwest, and West), (2) urbanicity (3) intensity of outreach, and (4) primary workshop participants (parents, providers, or mixed). We used U.S. Census definitions to divide stations into four geographic regions (by state). We used the address of the station to assign urban or rural status, again using U.S. Census definitions.[1] We used basic information available from stations' final reports to PBS from the first five-year grant (reporting through September 2000), to distinguish those with "average" or "high" levels of

[1]Although it would have been more meaningful to assign stations to urban or rural areas based on their outreach areas, at the time, we did not have that information. Therefore, we used the less precise method of assigning urban or rural status by the station's address. In two instances, we replaced stations that had rural addresses with ones that had urban addresses. In both cases, the Coordinators assured us that much of their outreach took place in rural areas, and they otherwise closely resembled the stations originally selected.

outreach. Stations that ranked in the top third in number of workshops (reporting at least 63 in the past year), and that had average attendance at workshops between 9 and 49 people, had high levels of outreach.[2] We also grouped programs according to primary workshop participants, based on the proportion of workshops reported to have been for providers only, parents only, or mixed parent and provider groups.[3]

To select potential stations, we first separated them by geographic region, then, within regions, into urban or rural areas. We computed the proportion of all the RTL stations represented in each region and used that figure to select similar proportions for the visits. Then, we allocated the number we wanted to select within each region evenly across urban and rural areas (for example, if we selected four sites in a region, then two slots were allotted for urban and two for rural programs). Finally, depending on the distribution of stations with high levels of outreach, we selected a desired number of stations to visit within each of the four cells per region (urbanicity by level of outreach). Sometimes there was no station with a high level of outreach in an area, so it was not always possible to select one. As we nominated sites, we compared the sample proportions of station workshop audiences to those in all the Ready To Learn stations, and adjusted choices to match these overall proportions as closely as possible (43 percent parents only, 24 percent providers, and 33 percent mixed, based on the final reports). Our goal was to select a total of 10 stations with an average level of outreach and 10 stations with a high level of outreach. A final consideration was stations' locations relative to each other. In a few cases, once the other criteria were satisfied, we chose sites near each other, to allow two visits in one trip—to minimize travel costs and time. Table II.1 shows how the final selection of sites is distributed across the key groups.

[2]We considered attendance to filter out stations with many workshops but low attendance, or those that counted large events with hundreds of participants. This definition of "level of outreach" was based on the limited information available from stations' final reports.

[3]For simplicity, we considered whichever proportion was highest to be the main type of workshop in that station (for example, a station that reported 80 percent provider workshops, 5 percent parent, and 10 percent mixed was coded as providing mainly provider workshops).

Table II.1: Initial Classifications of Visited Ready To Learn Stations by Urbanicity, Level of Outreach, and Geography

Urban		Rural	
High Level of Outreach	Average Level of Outreach	High Level of Outreach	Average Level of Outreach
	Northeast		
A	B		D
	C		
	South		
E	H		J
F	I		
G			
	Midwest		
K	M	N	P
L		O	
	West		
Q	S		T
R			

NOTE: Geographic delineations and urbanicity are based on U.S. Census 2000 data for the city of the station address. Statewide networks include many rural areas although their station addresses are categorized as urban. Level of outreach was based on stations' final reports to PBS for the period ending August 2000.

Visited Stations and Their Communities Were Diverse

Although we did not have station license information at the time we nominated sites, the final sample included stations with license types in proportions similar to those in the entire group of Ready To Learn stations. The license types are: (1) community, (2) university, (3) state, and (4) local authority. The license types define the type of entity that owns and operates a member station. Community licenses are held by nonprofit organizations that are governed by boards of directors, university licenses are held by colleges or universities, state licenses are held by state governments, and local authority licenses are held by local educational or municipal authorities, often school boards. Table II.2 summarizes the proportions of license types among all the Ready To Learn stations and those in our sample.

Table II.2: Comparison of Proportions of All Ready To Learn Stations and Sampled Ready To Learn Station License Types

License Type	Proportion Among All Ready To Learn Stations	Proportion in Visited 20 Ready To Learn Stations
Community	56 percent	60 percent
University	29 percent	20 percent
State	12 percent	15 percent
Local Authority	4 percent	5 percent

SOURCE: PBS Ready To Learn Department.

Coordinators Assisted in Setting Up Site Visits

We developed a set of four interview protocols to guide interviews with: (1) Coordinators, (2) station staff (primarily managers, programmers, or fundraisers), (3) community partners, and (4) workshop participants. All MPR site visitors and a PBS Ready To Learn Department staff member attended a day-long training session to review protocols, good interviewing procedures, and expectations for the site visit summaries. The guides and training sessions were designed to ensure that we collected thorough, consistent information from all sites.

We made telephone calls to Coordinators at the selected stations, to describe the visits, then followed up with letters that detailed the information we were interested in learning and the types of people we would like to interview. Each Coordinator then arranged meetings during one-day visits, based on the people who were most knowledgeable about the Ready To Learn program and who were available to speak to us. All Coordinators were able to arrange interviews with community partners, but few were able to locate former participants who could speak about their experiences at workshops. Often, workshop participants were not available to be interviewed during the visit because of work schedules. It seemed to us that Coordinators seemed reluctant to ask this of people with whom they did not have strong relationships. In several cases, participants who were interviewed had, since initial participation, become more involved with Ready To Learn and were either now themselves facilitators or had formed partnerships with Ready To Learn and were probably not representative of the average workshop participant.

Table II.3 summarizes basic information about the 20 visited stations, including license type and measures of their size and station membership. We classified stations according to size for some cross-site comparisons.[4] We considered small stations those with 49 or fewer full-time equivalent (FTE) employees, medium stations those with 50 to 105 FTE employees, and large stations those with more than 105 FTE employees. Stations' Ready To Learn budgets closely corresponded with these groupings; but this was not a factor in our classification. In our sample, we had seven small, six medium, and seven large stations.

[4]In the baseline survey (Vogel et al. 2001), we characterized station size somewhat differently, based on a more global measure of a station's overall financial well-being developed by PBS, called the Program Pricing Factor (PPF). We found that applying the PPF to this sample resulted in a very small grouping of the largest stations and therefore, we did not use it.

Table II.3: Overview of 20 Ready To Learn Stations

Station	License Type	Type of Market	Station Membership	Annual Station Budget (Millions)	Number of FTE Station Employees
I	State	Mixed	22,000	$9	85
R	University	Urban	52,000	$13	97
S	Community	Urban	200,000	$47	230
Q	State	Mixed	70,000	$11	135
E	Local Authority	Mixed	13,500	$9	110
N	State	Mostly rural	70,000	$30	155
P	University	Rural	200	$1	15
L	Community	Mixed	27,000	$7	70
G	State	Mixed	20,000	$15	100
A	Community	Urban/outreach extends to rural areas	202,000	$207	986
K	Community	Mixed	101,000	$17	150
M	Community	Urban and rural	36,000	$10	105
T	University	Rural	8,200	$1	22
D	Community	Rural	11,000	$2	33
O	University	Rural	9,500	$3	33
B	Community	Mixed	17,000	$5	35
C	Community	Mixed	120,000	$26	170
J	Community	Rural	1,500	$1	14
F	Community	Mixed	26,000	$8	65
H	Community	Urban	5,500	$1	18

SOURCE: Site visits to PBS member stations and interviews with key Ready To Learn program staff.

NOTE: Mixed markets refers to those that include urban, rural, and suburban areas.

The communities that Coordinators served through outreach also were diverse. Table II.4 compares a few key characteristics of the communities that Coordinators reported were the focus of their outreach efforts—these were often a subset of the broadcast area. Unemployment in the outreach areas was generally higher than the national average, and some Coordinators noted unemployment as a problem in their outreach areas. Similarly, in many cases, the percentage of children living below the federal poverty level was often higher in outreach areas than the national average. For each primary outreach area (based on counties or states) we used 1990 U.S. Census data to calculate the percentage of people over age five who spoke a language other than English, and, of them, the percentage who did not speak English "very well" (not shown in table). Although the overall proportion of people who spoke other languages varied greatly (from a low of 2 percent to a high of 67 percent), roughly similar proportions of these groups reported poor English speaking skills. In most cases, the proportion of people who spoke other languages but did not speak English very well ranged from almost one-fifth to more than one-half. These figures indicate that all the

stations we visited had members of their community with low English proficiency, although the size of this population varied.

Table II.4: Community Characteristics of Primary Outreach Area

Station	Annual Average Unemployment Rate	Percent Below Poverty Line	Percent Children Below Poverty Line	Percent Living in Urban Areas	Percent Living in Rural Areas
I	4.6	18	25	54	46
R	3.0	14	22	95	5
S	2.1	13	22	100	0
Q	2.7	16	27	82	18
E	3.9	14	21	92	9
N	2.6	10	14	61	39
P	5.4	14	19	75	25
L	2.5	12	20	100	0
M	3.3	15	23	98	2
G	5.5	18	13	68	32
A	2.6	11	17	84	16
K	3.1	16	23	40	60
T	4.9	16	21	53	47
D	8.7	16	23	32	68
O	4.2	9	12	58	41
B	4.9	8	16	56	44
C	4.5	22	33	100	0
J	9.6	14	33	36	64
F	2.0	12	17	91	9
H	8.2	28	39	97	3
U.S. National Averages	*4.0*	*13*	*20*	*75*	*25*

SOURCE: U.S. Census for 1990, 1997, and 2000 and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics for 2000.

NOTE: In cases where outreach took place in more than one county, we computed the average for the entire outreach area.

Making A Place For Ready To Learn

Through our discussions with Ready To Learn and other station staff, we learned how the Ready To Learn program fits within each of the stations we visited—the level of

interaction between Ready To Learn and other station staff and departments and the level and kind of support stations provide their Ready To Learn programs. Our visits gave us a better understanding of how the Ready To Learn budget works within the context of each station, as well as providing a glimpse of the many hats some of the Ready To Learn Coordinators wear at their stations. In addition, we discovered what stations see as both the benefits and the challenges of being a Ready To Learn station.

Ready To Learn Fits Naturally in the Stations' Structure

Many Ready To Learn stations were organized so as to have five to seven separate departments. Typically, there were departments that handled programming, production, marketing or development, operations, and education. In most stations, Ready To Learn became a part of either the education/learning services or outreach departments and enhanced or increased the services already being offered through these departments.

For a few stations, becoming a Ready To Learn station required some organizational adjustment. Some of the services provided by the program, such as the outreach component, were new for these stations. For two of the stations we visited, becoming a Ready To Learn program meant creating a new department to operate the program. For another station, adopting the Ready To Learn program meant giving outreach a higher priority and building a stronger outreach department. It appeared that in some stations, Ready To Learn provided a framework and a model for doing community outreach. For example, one station reported that Ready To Learn gave them a model for conducting workshops which they then used in other community outreach efforts.

Interdepartmental Interactions to Support Ready To Learn Were Often Frequent

To learn more about the level of interaction between Ready To Learn and other station staff, and about the level of support stations provided their Ready To Learn programs, we asked site visitors to both describe and rate the level of staff interaction and station support. Site visitors gave stations a rating of high, medium, or low. Two rating scales, described below, were created to serve as a guide for assigning the ratings (Table II.5).

For most stations, site visitors rated the frequency and quality of interaction between Ready To Learn and other station staff as either high or medium. One station manager described his station as a "family" in which everyone helps each other out. At this small station, it is not unusual for staff from all departments to participate in large Ready To Learn events. At others, Ready To Learn staff reported meeting at least once a week with staff from other departments to work on some Ready To Learn project or activity. Only four of the stations we visited received a rating of low for level of interaction. A Coordinator from one of these stations reported having only periodic interactions with staff from other departments. In a few stations, the Coordinators reported that they were not well integrated, that the rest of the station staff were not aware of Ready To Learn or what they did.

Table II.5: Definitions of Interdepartmental Interaction and Station Support of Ready To Learn Ratings

Rating	Definition	Number of Stations Classified
Level of Interaction		
High	Ready To Learn staff indicate close or frequent interaction or collaboration with other station departments. Other station staff report having regular responsibilities in the Ready To Learn program, such as preparing budget, fundraising, or creating materials to promote the program.	9
Medium	Ready To Learn staff work periodically with other station departments on particular projects, like organizing or promoting large community events.	7
Low	Ready To Learn staff indicate only past or infrequent interaction with other station departments.	4
Level of Station Support		
High	Ready To Learn staff are pleased with the support their station offers, other station staff are knowledgeable about what the program is and what it does, and the station helps to promote and raise money for the program.	7
Medium	Ready To Learn staff indicate that station support is adequate, but they could use more help. Also, other station staff are aware of the program.	8
Low	Ready To Learn staff report that station support or awareness is low and other station staff know very little about the program.	5

SOURCE: Site visits to PBS member stations and interviews with key Ready To Learn program staff.

SAMPLE SIZE: 20 stations.

Levels of interdepartmental interactions and station support go hand in hand. By "station support," we refer to the station's willingness to contribute resources and to assist in finding outside funding, as well as the level of awareness non-Ready To Learn staff have about the program. The stations that were rated high or medium for level of interaction also received a rating of high or medium for their level of station support. Similarly, the four stations with a rating of "low" for their level of interaction received a rating of low for level of support. In a more extreme case, the Coordinator from a station rated as offering low support reported feeling isolated and unsupported by the larger station.

Most Stations Received Additional Funding for Ready To Learn

One goal of the site visits was to learn more about the Ready To Learn budgets. We wanted to know how many of the stations we visited received funding from sources other than PBS, how much the stations contributed to Ready To Learn, and what expenses were covered by the budget. We hoped that the answers to these questions would provide us with an opportunity to learn what it actually costs stations to operate a Ready To Learn program.

Three-quarters of the 20 stations we visited received funding from sources other than PBS. The amount of additional funding these stations received ranged from $5,000 to $293,000. The large stations we visited appeared to be leveraging larger amounts of additional funding than smaller stations. In most cases, the additional funding came from private grants from foundations or corporations. However, based on our discussions with both Coordinators and other station staff, the Ready To Learn program at all 20 stations received some support in addition to the PBS implementation funds from the stations themselves.

Often, station contributions were not in the form of direct contributions to the program, but through support of some program costs, often staff salaries. It was difficult to characterize the magnitude of this station support since most Coordinators were unable to determine how much of the station's budget went to Ready To Learn expenses. In addition, any estimated amounts did not take into account the value of less tangible or in-kind contributions from the stations, such as fringe benefits or time other staff spent on Ready To Learn activities.

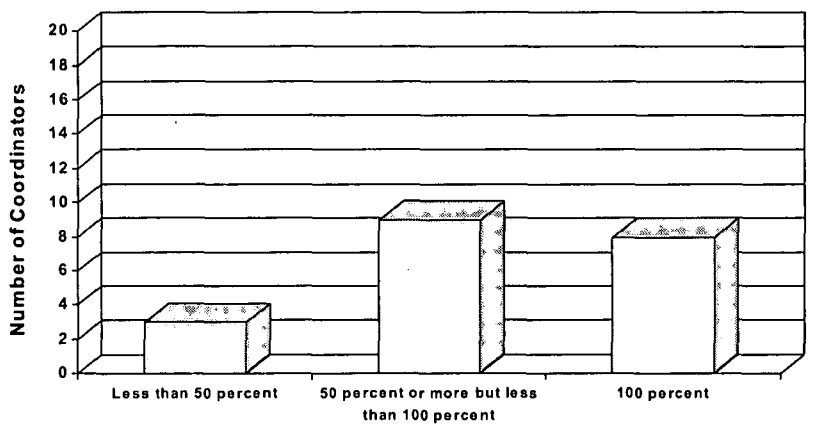
The ways in which stations' total Ready To Learn budgets were allocated varied among the stations we visited. In all stations, a certain proportion of the Ready To Learn budget (which included the PBS grant and other outside funds) paid for workshop materials, children's books, travel expenses, or staff salaries. However, stations varied in the proportion of their budget appropriated for these expenses. Some stations budgeted larger amounts for books, while others budgeted more for salaries. One station used the PBS grant entirely for the Coordinator's salary, covering all other program expenses through the stations' operating funds and other funds raised from outside sources. Other stations paid the Coordinator's salary from station funds and used the total Ready To Learn budget to cover materials and other program costs.

Complicating matters in some stations was the fact that Coordinators differentiated expenditures by funding stream. For example, because some funders had different requirements, some Coordinators purchased the snacks offered at a workshop with funds from one funding source, purchased workshop materials with another, and paid the facilitator with still another.

Ready To Learn Coordinators Wore Many Hats

In 13 of the 20 stations we visited, the Ready To Learn Coordinator had worked at the station in other positions for at least 6 months before becoming the Coordinator. Only a few Coordinators were hired specifically for the Ready To Learn Coordinator position. Coordinators often had multiple responsibilities. Several of the Coordinators we met were vice presidents, directors, or managers of the departments that included Ready To Learn. One Coordinator reported that, on top of her Ready To Learn responsibilities, she was also responsible for coordinating her station's Instructional Television Program, hosting a weekly "magazine" show, writing a column for the station's program guide, and participating in all station fund-raising events. In 12 stations, the Coordinators we met did not spend 100 percent of their time on Ready To Learn. In the other 8 stations, the Coordinators reported spending 100 percent of their time on Ready To Learn (one of these Coordinators held a half-time position). In the baseline survey and the site visits, we found that many Coordinators had other station duties in addition to their Ready To Learn responsibilities. Yet, despite wearing many hats at their stations, most of the Coordinators we spoke with reported spending half of their time or more on Ready To Learn (see Figure II.1).

Figure: II.1: Percent of Time Coordinators Spent on Ready To Learn



SAMPLE SIZE: 20 Coordinators.

One consequence of the multiple job responsibilities that Coordinators reported appears to be job stress. In the baseline Coordinator survey (Vogel et al. 2001), 61 percent of Coordinators reported that they usually felt their job was stressful. In addition, as we see later in this chapter, both station managers and Coordinators reported that demands on staff time were a major challenge to operating a Ready To Learn program.

Multiple roles for Coordinators may facilitate interdepartmental interaction—something we found that was related to favorable station support. It appeared that Coordinators' multiple roles could have been another indication of their influence within the station. Better-integrated Coordinators may have been more successful in negotiating for additional staff, funding, or other types of station support (such as use of other station resources to promote Ready To Learn).

Station Benefits of Ready To Learn Outnumbered Challenges

For most stations, the benefits of being a Ready To Learn station outnumbered the challenges. Many of the stations we visited felt that Ready To Learn helped them fulfill their educational mission, connected them more with the communities they serve, and increased their funding potential. Table II.6 represents the benefits and challenges stations reported most frequently.

The most frequently mentioned challenges in being a Ready To Learn station were the cost to the station, both in the time demands on staff and the money needed to run the program. Station management staff felt that the program was extremely demanding of staff time. The time demands were especially challenging for small stations, particularly those that lacked the resources to hire additional help. A few of the smaller stations, however, have come up with creative, low-cost ways of providing their Ready To Learn staff with extra help, such as working with Americorps and retired volunteers.

Time and Travel Biggest Coordinator Challenges

Coordinators mentioned numerous challenges in implementing Ready To Learn—although, in many cases, the same issues were identified across stations. The personal challenges to Coordinators were, in many cases, similar to those for the station overall. Lack of time was mentioned by Coordinators from eight stations, which could be related to the multiple roles of most Coordinators at their respective stations. The stations from which these Coordinators came ranged across all sizes and license types and served both urban and rural areas. Four of these Coordinators mentioned that time constraints were tied to the travel required to give workshops. Most of the Coordinators who mentioned travel as problematic were from state networks. Given the constraints of additional station responsibilities and/or the Coordinators' part-time status, together with the demanding nature of the job, it is not surprising that Coordinators said they did not have enough time.

Table II.6: Benefits and Challenges to Stations Resulting from Ready To Learn Participation

	Number of Stations
Benefits	
Helps station fulfill mission	8
Connects station to community	8
Increases station's funding potential	8
Improves station's reputation and standing in the community	8
Increases viewership	5
Gives station a vehicle to reach minority populations	3
Improves children's programming	3
Makes a difference in children's lives	3
Challenges	
Costs to run Ready To Learn	11
Time demands placed on staff	6
Covering the outreach area	4
Conducting internal evaluations	3

SOURCE: Site visits to PBS member stations and interviews with key Ready To Learn and station staff.

NOTE: Stations do not sum to 20 because some staff gave multiple responses.

SAMPLE SIZE: 20 stations.

Summary

- **Ready To Learn was well integrated into stations' structure.** In most stations, the process of becoming a Ready To Learn station was relatively smooth. However, for a few stations, adopting the program meant making some structural changes. For the most part, these changes led to other positive things, such as laying the foundation for doing more outreach and for strengthening the station's commitment to children's educational television. We also learned that, for most stations, the Ready To Learn program received support, and staff had frequent interactions within the station.

- **Most of the stations obtained additional funding beyond the PBS grant to enhance the program.** In addition to direct funding from foundations or corporate sources, stations also contributed, often through supporting salaries or program expenses.

- **Stations value Ready To Learn, despite the challenges.** Station staff felt that Ready To Learn strengthened ties to, and created goodwill in, their communities. The biggest challenges that stations faced were, one, finding sufficient time, and, two, financial resources to run the program. Coordinators echoed the challenges of station management, with time and travel cited as the most challenging aspects of their jobs.

CHAPTER III

READY TO LEARN STAFFING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Perhaps one of the most important aspects of our site visits was gaining a better picture of who the Ready To Learn Coordinators were, how they worked within their stations, and how they approached their professional development requirement.

The PBS Ready To Learn Subcontract Agreement states that: "The station will designate an individual with appropriate knowledge, skills, and experience as the Ready To Learn Coordinator with responsibility for the development and implementation of the station's Ready To Learn program."

From our discussions with the 20 Coordinators we met we learned more about their professional and educational backgrounds; what qualified them to be Coordinators; and what it was like for them in their role as Coordinators at their station.

Not All Coordinators Had a Background in Education

Although there was some variation in the educational and professional backgrounds of the Coordinators, most had four-year college degrees and experience working as educators. Similar to our findings in the baseline Coordinator survey, we also found that many Coordinators had a master's degree (more than 50 percent), and that their experience as educators ranged from early elementary education to adult. However, not all the Coordinators we spoke with reported a background in education. For example, one Coordinator had a background in marketing, and another had worked as a human resource director for a number of years before going into public television. Several Coordinators reported having backgrounds in psychology. Nearly half of the Coordinators indicated that they had prior experience in public television before coming to their current station. One Coordinator reported having worked in public television for a total of 23 years.

Tenure and Seniority Count

In many stations, the length of time a Coordinator worked at the station or the position a Coordinator held at the station seemed to determine the degree of autonomy the Coordinator had in his or her job. Coordinators who had been with their stations for five or more years, or who had been either a vice president or a department director, appeared to have more decision-making power and received little or no supervision. A few Coordinators with more seniority at their station reported having greater influence over which children's television programs the station will air and when they will air them. A few Coordinators with less influence in their stations' program schedule expressed frustration when children's programs they used in workshops were aired at times that children were not able to view them (because they were in school, for example). In addition, Coordinators with more time on the job and greater seniority in their position were better able to negotiate with their stations to get extra help or time off to attend Ready To Learn professional development activities.

Being a Coordinator Required Many Skills

According to the Coordinators we spoke with, being a Ready To Learn Coordinator requires numerous skills. The skills listed below represent what Coordinators felt were the most important for their position.

- A good understanding of adult education, since the program is directed toward parents and professionals
- Understanding group dynamics
- Understanding child development
- Having an interest in children and their learning
- Flexibility
- Resourcefulness
- An ability to network
- Being able to work with people from diverse backgrounds

Nearly all the Coordinators we met with, including those without a background in education, felt that their past professional experience had prepared them for their roles as Ready To Learn Coordinators. In one case, a Coordinator identified marketing experience as an important asset in promoting the program more effectively and establishing stronger

partnerships. Another Coordinator, with a background in psychology, felt that her past experience had better prepared her to deal with the diverse needs of the participants in her workshops. Several Coordinators reported drawing on their own experience as parents to better connect with the parents in their workshops.

Ready To Learn Coordinators Were Dedicated

Most Coordinators reported that they enjoyed their jobs, and that they felt they were making a difference in the lives of the children and families in their communities. Each Coordinator we spoke with had at least one story to tell about a child or a parent who was especially touched by the program. According to one of the Coordinators, "Many of the children I come in contact with have never had a book of their own." Another Coordinator felt that she was giving parents the tools with which to do something positive for their children. Such responses reflect what more than 90 percent of the Coordinators from the baseline survey indicated was their source of motivation to do their jobs: affecting the lives of children and helping parents.

Despite Dedication, Coordinator Turnover Was High

Turnover among Coordinators in the stations we visited has been fairly high. In half of the stations, the Coordinator we interviewed was not the original Coordinator. Further, in the time between our site visits in summer 2001, and writing this report in the fall of that year, we learned that three of the Coordinators we had met with during the visits had since left their positions. This turnover may reflect the high levels of job stress that Coordinators reported in the survey. In Chapter II, we described the many and varied responsibilities Coordinators had at their stations which may contribute to job stress. We have little or no information as to why the Coordinators who left their positions chose to do so.

Professional Development

The PBS Ready To Learn Station Subcontract Agreement states that: "The Station's Ready To Learn Coordinator will participate in a minimum of forty (40) hours per year of professional development activities...including the annual RTL seminar..." This requirement was refined in December 2001 to allow another Ready To Learn staff member to acquire 10 of the required 40 hours. We know from the baseline Coordinator survey that, by the end of April 2001, most Coordinators had participated in professional development and that, on average, they had completed about half the required hours (Vogel et al. 2001). For this report, we were interested to learn (1) what Coordinators' professional development goals were, (2) how supportive they perceived their stations to be in meeting professional development goals, and (3) how supportive they perceived PBS to be.

We categorized the numerous professional development goals that Coordinators listed and found that most of the goals could be subsumed under three broad areas: (1) substantive

topics, (2) Ready To Learn program operation topics, and (3) technical topics. Most commonly, Coordinators mentioned goals that fell under substantive areas that were related to the content of workshops or that could inform outreach to diverse communities. Examples included cultural diversity, educational standards, child development, and early childhood education, as well as more specific topics, such as serving children with special needs. Several Coordinators' goals fit within program operation and management. They specifically stated goals for becoming better at workshop facilitation, grant writing, organization, and planning. Least frequently, Coordinators mentioned that they were interested in such technical topics as Web design or local evaluation as part of their professional development goals.

Station Support of Coordinator Professional Development Was Strong

The majority of Coordinators reported that they had received a great deal of support from their stations for professional development. Most stations allowed Coordinators time away from their jobs to pursue professional development. Many Coordinators reported that they had attended numerous national and regional professional conferences, and several had made presentations at these conferences as well. Some stations provided tuition reimbursement and other financial support, in addition to the time away. Only one Coordinator reported that her station did not have enough funds to support much professional development.

Coordinators Offered Suggestions to Further Improve PBS Support of Professional Development

Overall, Coordinators were pleased with the level of professionalism PBS has added to their positions as Coordinators. Many Coordinators extolled the value of the annual PBS Coordinator seminars. One Coordinator noted that she was glad PBS required a professional development line item in the Ready To Learn budget, because this made it easier for her to justify the necessity of professional development to her station.

In addition to their positive comments, several offered suggestions for improving the professional development offerings:

- Increase opportunities to participate in training with other Coordinators, in addition to the annual seminar
- Offer professional development in additional areas (such as nutrition, coping with violence, media literacy, and cultural diversity)
- Offer online courses and/or teleconferences

- Use the professional development and technical assistance center to develop peer coaching or peer-mentoring models, to allow Coordinators to learn from each other
- Provide more information on serving children with special needs and more introductory materials for new Coordinators
- Provide adaptations of workshops that address cultural differences and the needs of special populations

It is important to note that Coordinators were appreciative of the strides PBS has made in support of Coordinators' professional development. Coordinators, however, were interested in further strengthening the links between their jobs and their professional development.

Summary

- **Coordinators' experience was valuable in their jobs.** We learned that not all Coordinators had a background in early childhood education. Yet, no matter what their background, Coordinators felt that their past professional experiences prepared them for their roles as Ready To Learn Coordinators.
- **Many stations experienced high Coordinator turnover.** Half of the stations we visited had experienced turnover in Coordinators since becoming Ready To Learn stations. However, despite the turnover, most Coordinators reported feeling good about what they do.
- **Coordinators were satisfied with station and PBS support for their professional development.** Several Coordinators offered suggestions for ways to improve PBS's support of their professional development.

CHAPTER IV

READY TO LEARN WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

One aim of Ready To Learn is to encourage Coordinators to build on community resources already in existence. In that way, stations can augment services available in established systems rather than reinvent them from scratch. Community partnerships are critical to building on available resources and are therefore important to the success of Ready To Learn. Community partnerships are viewed as the most efficient way to reach the most families and child care providers, as well as to reach those who are part of the traditional public broadcasting audience. The PBS Ready To Learn Station Subcontract Agreement states that: "If such organizations exist in station's area, then the station shall use its best efforts to collaborate with Head Start centers and center-based and family-based childcare organizations, public school pre-kindergarten programs, and Even Start Family Literacy programs. In addition, the station shall work with after school programs funded under the 21st Century Community Learning Centers, and early childhood literacy, language, and reading organizations." As part of our site visits, we met with some of the community partners currently involved with the programs at each station. Through our discussions with partners and Ready To Learn staff, we learned more about the types of community partners that participate in Ready To Learn, the various roles that partners play, and the nature of the relationships between the partners and Ready To Learn staff.

Coordinators Established Partnerships to Aid Outreach

Coordinators were successful in forging community partnerships to aid their outreach efforts. Every station we visited had established some community partnerships. The average number of community partners established by the 20 stations we visited was 19, ranging from 2 to 56. Coordinators indicated that, similar to the findings from the baseline Coordinator survey, their partnerships were primarily with schools, child care centers, child care resource and referral agencies, Head Start and Even Start programs, and other community organizations.

Overall, station size did not appear to be related to the number of community partners a station had. In fact, two of the smaller stations we visited reported having 50 or more community partners. We found some evidence that other considerations may affect the types of partners pursued by a Coordinator. For example, a Coordinator from a state network reported that, to reach people throughout the state, she sought partnerships with statewide agencies rather than with local community organizations.

Coordinators varied in their approach to establishing partnerships. Some Coordinators had few partnerships, and did not tend to actively seek out more partners but worked to have close relationships with existing ones. Others made the establishment of partnerships a primary activity. Some stations had dozens of partners. Several stations with a large number of partners had regular meetings with them (often, with all the partners at the same meeting) to update them on Ready To Learn activities. Although we learned about some stations that had experienced failed partnerships, it seemed that, in most cases, Coordinators viewed partnerships as beneficial.

Schools Most Frequently Mentioned Partners

Coordinators reported numerous types of community partners, although, in general, all were educationally focused organizations serving families. In our sample, schools were the most frequently mentioned community partner, followed closely by child care providers and such community organizations as libraries, health centers, and child care resource and referral agencies. Relatively few Coordinators mentioned Head Start, Even Start, and 21st Century Learning Centers as important partners. Table IV.1 illustrates the number of Coordinators who mentioned a particular type of community partner.

Table IV.1: Primary Partnerships Reported by Coordinators

Partner	Number of Stations
Schools	8
Child care providers	6
Community organizations	6
Head Start or Even Start	5
Child care resource and referral agencies	4
Libraries	4
YMCA	1
Parent/teacher programs	1

SOURCE: Site visits to PBS member stations and interviews with key Ready To Learn program staff.

NOTE: Several stations reported more than one primary partner.

SAMPLE SIZE: 20 stations.

Partnerships Were Mainly Informal

Contrary to the findings from our baseline Coordinator survey, most Coordinators reported that they did not formalize their partnerships with contracts, written agreements, or memoranda of understanding. At the time of our visits, only six stations reported having formal contracts or agreements with at least some of their partners. (Some stations had different agreements for different partners, described more fully below.) In a few cases, Coordinators reported that they were occasionally dissatisfied with the functioning of their partnerships, and had concluded that it might help to formalize the partnerships. For example, one Coordinator mentioned that verbal agreements worked well except when staff at the partner organization left their jobs—in which case, the organization would sometimes balk at continuing to fulfill the agreement. This Coordinator felt that, in such situations, a more formal agreement would offer the station protection.

In many cases, even those stations with formal agreements did not have them with all their partners. Coordinators worked with different partners in different ways; they defined partnerships that required different roles of partners, then sought out partners to fill the different roles. Partners could then choose the form of partnership that best suited their organization.

Partners' Roles Varied

Partners tended to fall into three categories: (1) those that primarily donated space or assisted in recruiting participants for workshops (they might also initiate the scheduling of the workshop); (2) those that planned and facilitated workshops on an ongoing basis—often to an existing clientele, such as an Even Start program; and (3) those that primarily distributed books for the stations.

Although we were unable to obtain copies of formal agreements from all the stations that used them, we did note some similarities in the ones we obtained. In many cases, partners with formal partnerships agreed to advertise workshops and otherwise recruit workshop participants, plan and facilitate workshops, distribute children's books, complete paperwork about workshop attendance, and attend workshop trainings or other meetings. Frequently, station staff agreed to provide support, materials, and children's books to their partners. Table IV.2 notes the most frequently mentioned partner roles and the number of stations that reported each.

Partners Had Favorable Impressions of Ready To Learn

We asked Coordinators to invite representatives from their primary partner organizations to speak to us, either in person or by telephone. In most cases, we were able to meet with staff from partner organizations in person, although we had telephone interviews with partners of several stations. Many partners noted the benefits of the partnership that had accrued to their organization, often by making them more visible in the

community. Others expressed their belief that the program provided a needed resource, particularly in poor and rural communities. Many partners were grateful to get free books for distribution to children who needed them.

Table IV.2: Commonly Reported Roles of Community Partners

Role of Partner	Number of Stations
Distribute children's books and other program materials	15
Host workshops/donate space or workshops	15
Recruit workshop participants	15
Recruit target populations	9
Facilitate workshops	7
Co-sponsor community events	5
Attend train-the-trainer workshops	4
Act as translators	4
Provide feedback about workshops to Coordinator	3

SOURCE: Site visits to PBS member stations and interviews with key Ready To Learn program staff.

NOTE: One station reported that partners provided funding.

SAMPLE SIZE: 20 stations.

For the most part, Coordinators were pleased with their partnerships and felt that they helped the program reach the people who needed Ready To Learn most. However, a few Coordinators mentioned problems in the relationships: (1) getting buy-in from partners—some partners were resistant to the idea that television can be used as a learning tool; (2) establishing and maintaining partnerships due to staff turnover in partner agencies; and (3) supplying needed support to partners who provide workshops—some partners needed a great deal of support from Coordinators.

Summary

- **Stations tend to establish partnerships with the types of organizations that PBS intended.** However, there did not seem to be a particular emphasis on Head Start, Even Start, and 21st Century Learning Centers as partners in the stations we visited.

- **Stations varied greatly in the number of community partnerships they reported and in the formality of those partnerships.** Many stations reported that their partners took on a set of clearly defined roles.

- **Overall, both partners and Coordinators were pleased with the way the partnerships operated.**

CHAPTER V

READY TO LEARN OUTREACH

The PBS Ready To Learn Station Subcontract Agreement states that: "The station will conduct a minimum of twenty (20) Ready To Learn outreach workshops using RTL materials for childcare providers, early childhood teachers, and families." A Ready To Learn workshop is a substantive training provided in one or more sessions intended to help adults extend the educational value of PBS children's programming using the Ready To Learn learning triangle—View, Read, and Do.

Because workshops are a defining feature of Ready To Learn, we spent a lot of time during our site visits exploring what the workshops were like, who attended them, their content, their length, and how they were delivered. For the most part, we found that features of the workshops reported by Coordinators during the site visits corresponded to those reported by all the Coordinators in the baseline survey. However, the site visits allowed us to obtain more in-depth information on workshop content and the methods Coordinators used to deliver workshops.

Most Coordinators Exceeded The Required Number of Workshops

Overall, as in the baseline Coordinator survey, we found that most Coordinators far exceeded the required 20 workshops per year. On average, the Coordinators in the visited stations conducted more than 3 times the required 20 workshops (72 workshops) in the past year.[1]

[1]The average omits one station reporting over 800 workshops. If that station is included, the average number of workshops among the 20 stations increases from 72 to 109. Also, one station had stopped giving workshops because the community partner who facilitated them left her position and had not been replaced. The workshop totals reported rely on figures reported to PBS at the end of the 2000 fiscal year (September 2000 to August 2001), except in three cases where we learned that Coordinators did not report all the workshops
(footnote continued)

Coordinators reported an average attendance of about 20 people per workshop.[2] A few Coordinators, however, specifically mentioned having problems achieving the attendance they desired or were accustomed to seeing in workshops; thus, the average may be somewhat inflated because the Coordinators may have provided desired attendance numbers.

Large Stations Held the Most Workshops and Had the Most Facilitators

Station size was closely aligned with both the number of workshops stations reported and the number of facilitators conducting them. By the end of the 2000 fiscal year, Coordinators from large- and medium-size stations reported offering the most workshops (180 and 76, respectively). One Coordinator from a large station reported a much higher number of workshops than was reported by the others; omitting that station, the average number of workshops for large stations dropped to 92. Coordinators from small stations reported an average of 51 workshops in the previous year.

The number of workshop facilitators was the key to the difference in the numbers of workshops conducted; in addition, the number of facilitators aligned approximately with the sizes of the stations. The 8 largest stations had an average of 26 facilitators, although this number fell to 12 when we excluded one station with more than 100 facilitators. Medium-size stations had an average of 10 facilitators, while small stations had an average of 2. Overall, there were large variations in the number of people who conducted workshops for each station. Half the stations we visited had only one or two facilitators; the other half had between 5 and more than 100 facilitators. In many cases, the additional facilitators at large- and medium-size stations were not paid station staff or contract workers; very often, they worked for partner organizations.

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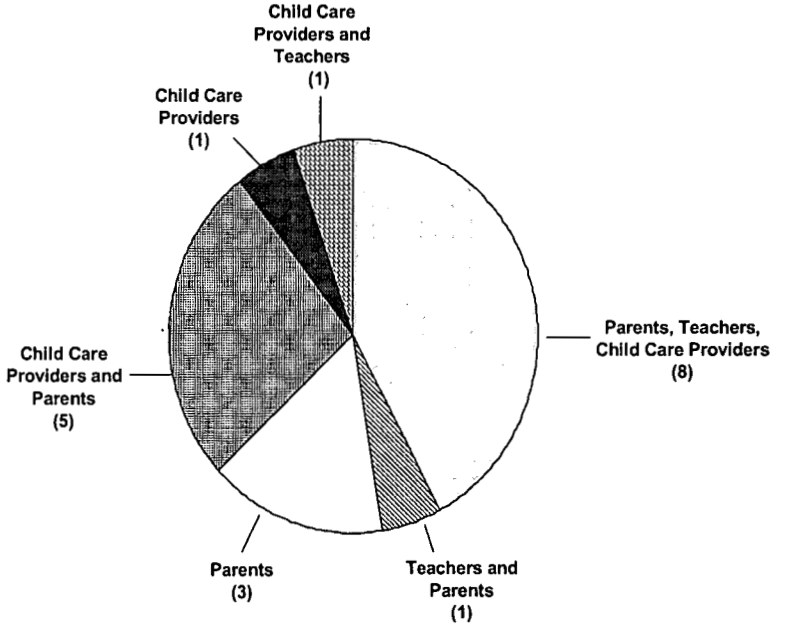
they did (often due to time constraints or because the workshops were not paid for by PBS funds).

[2]This figure uses the midpoint of ranges when ranges were reported.

Coordinators Focused Equally on Parents and Child Care Providers

According to most Coordinators, they served roughly equivalent proportions of parents, teachers, and child care providers in their workshops. Few Coordinators reported that most of their workshops were attended by a single group of participants (parents, child care providers, or teachers). Three Coordinators reported serving mostly parents and one Coordinator reported serving mostly child care providers. Four Coordinators mentioned that, in addition to workshops they provided some outreach activities for children, often in classrooms or at public libraries (see Figure V.1).

Figure V.1: Number of Stations with Each Type of Primary Workshop Participant



NOTE: Includes 19 stations currently giving workshops.

SAMPLE SIZE: 19 stations.

Coordinators had different mechanisms for offering workshops; some had more than one. In some stations, workshops were scheduled at the request of people or organizations in the community, who would call the Coordinator and request a workshop. At other stations, Coordinators scheduled and planned workshops, and community members could attend, but they could not request workshops. At some stations, Coordinators not only had a regularly scheduled set of workshops, they could also accommodate requests for workshops. Others relied on partners to schedule and hold workshops, although these Coordinators may also respond to workshop requests from the community.

It seemed that, most of the time, the focus on a particular set of participants occurred because this was a group that would attend a workshop. For example, in a few cases, where the station could offer credit toward licensure to child care providers, or if there was an important partnership with a child care resource and referral agency, child care providers would be a focus of the station's workshops. In other cases, parents or teachers were the focus because the station had been successful in getting them to attend. At a few stations, the Coordinator divided responsibilities for different workshops according to who attended. Often, workshops for child care providers were facilitated by staff from a child care resource-and-referral or a similar agency; workshops for all others were conducted by the Coordinator or some other facilitator.

Most Workshops Were Offered in One Session

The intensity of the outreach provided by most of the Coordinators to any particular workshop participant was relatively low. Most Coordinators reported that workshops were offered in a single session, and that a given session lasted from one to two hours. We have little information on the average number of exposures among the same group of people to different workshops; but, in general, it seemed that most stations did not work repeatedly with the same group of individuals. Four stations reported that some workshops were aimed at particular categories of participants (such as parents or child care providers), and that the length of the workshops varied. In each of these stations, parents were offered shorter sessions than were child care providers. On average in these four stations, parent workshops lasted 1.4 hours, compared to 3.2 hours for child care providers.

Seven stations reported that they offered workshops in more intensive, multiple sessions; but even at these stations, multi-session workshops were the exception rather than the rule. In a few cases, Coordinators specifically mentioned that they offered multi-session workshops only to particular groups. In three of these stations, multiple sessions were offered only to child care providers as part of an intensive series of training sessions; and, in one station, multiple session workshops were offered only to parents. It was difficult for Coordinators to estimate the proportion of those who attended the first session in a series and then went on to complete the rest of the sessions. In cases where child care providers received credits toward licensure for attendance, the Coordinators often assumed that all or nearly all participants attended each session. We noted that Coordinators seemed to be unsure whether they should concentrate on offering workshops to the most people possible, or if they should try to reach the same group over time for more intensive intervention.

Most Workshops Stressed Substantive Themes Rather than Television Programs

Although many Coordinators appeared to offer a wide range of workshops, including workshops that focused on conflict resolution, parenting skills, and social skills, most Coordinators reported offering workshops that focused primarily on media literacy. Several Coordinators also reported that their workshops focused on training facilitators.

In most cases, the media literacy workshops were similar in content and format among the 20 stations we visited. A typical workshop usually opened with an "ice breaker," during which the Coordinator introduced herself or himself and had participants engage in an activity to help them get to know one another. After this, most Coordinators provided a brief overview of Ready To Learn, then presented information about the positive and negative effects of television viewing on children. Before introducing the View-Read-Do model, many Coordinators engaged the participants in some kind of activity that might, for instance, involve naming their favorite children's television character or talking about books they had read as children. In most cases, the rest of the workshop focused on demonstrating and practicing the View-Read-Do model. What often varied in how Coordinators demonstrated the model was the program clips that the Coordinators chose to use in their workshops. The program most frequently used in the media literacy workshops was *Between the Lions*, followed by *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*, which were also the two most commonly used programs reported by Coordinators in the baseline survey.

Workshop content sometimes varied, depending on the participants. A number of Coordinators said that the workshops they provided to teachers and child care providers were more formal and technical than the workshops provided to parents. Some Coordinators reported that their expectations for parents to adopt the View-Read-Do model differed from those of child care providers. Some Coordinators expected parents to use the model in a less planned, more informal way; whereas, they wanted child care providers to use View-Read-Do as a model for planning and developing curricular content. Some Coordinators provided more materials and handouts with activities to teachers and child care providers than they did to parents because the Coordinators viewed these as curricular materials better suited to those groups.

All Coordinators indicated that, at one time or another during a workshop, they had had to alter the content to a manner better suited to the needs of the audience. One Coordinator reported having to do more interactive activities during a workshop to keep participants engaged. Another noted that sometimes, due to the low literacy skills of participants, she would change activities that required written responses, instead having a show of hands in response to questions. Coordinator flexibility in facilitating workshops seemed to be an important feature.

Less than Half of the Stations Offered Workshops in Languages Other than English

Stations with the largest non-English-speaking populations offered workshops in languages other than English. Coordinators at eight stations reported that they offered at least some of their workshops in languages other than English. Spanish was the most commonly offered "other" language; although, infrequently, there were others. In most cases, Coordinators themselves did not speak the other language, but would either employ facilitators who did, or would hire translators—sometimes partners would fill translator roles. One Coordinator reported that she tried to conduct a workshop with a translator, but found the experience so uncomfortable, she had not done so since. In a few instances, the

station hired Ready To Learn staff who spoke other languages to assist the Coordinator. Some reported that they routinely translated all workshop materials into other languages, while others reported that they relied on their partners to do so if needed. One Coordinator, whose station served many language minorities, stressed that at a minimum, Spanish translations of all Ready To Learn materials were essential.

Coordinators Wanted More Information on Serving Target Populations

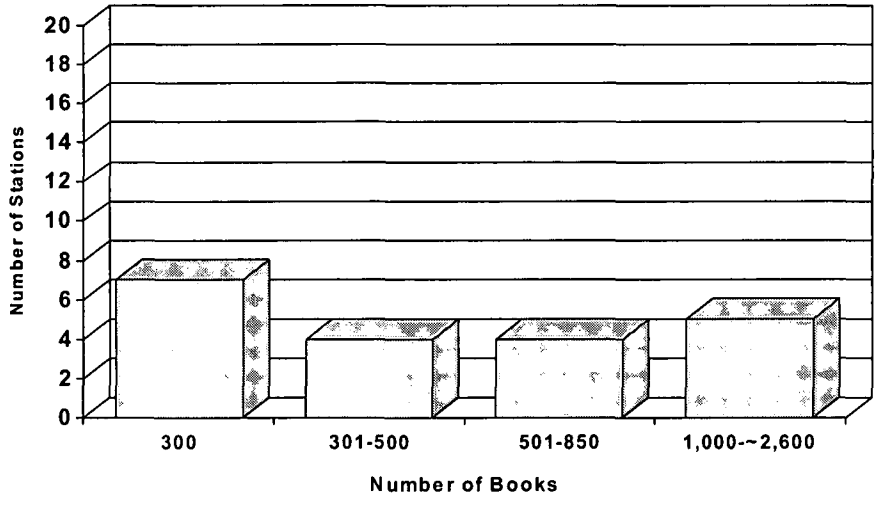
Coordinators were all aware of the special emphasis on serving people in four target populations: (1) families with low literacy, (2) families with limited English proficiency, (3) families living in rural areas, and (4) families with children with special needs. Coordinators often had a sense of which groups they were serving but, in most cases, were unable to give estimates of the numbers for each population that attended a workshop. Often, they relied on partner organizations to recruit the appropriate groups for workshops. If a Coordinator indicated that one or more of the target populations were *not* being served, the most commonly mentioned group was children with special needs. Two Coordinators specifically noted that they were not sure what is meant by "serving children with special needs," and that the workshop materials available from PBS were not developed or adapted for this population. Others indicated that they served few people living in rural areas, primarily because the station served a mostly urban market.

Seven stations had difficulties serving language minority populations. Of the seven, Coordinators from four stations noted that they had difficulties reaching non-English-speaking populations. They encountered language barriers, lack of translators, and lack of workshop materials in other languages. Three Coordinators mentioned that, in particular, Hispanic populations were difficult to reach because they sometimes did not trust the Coordinators' intentions and were reluctant to participate in workshops.

Children's Books Were an Important Component of Outreach

The distribution of children's books is an important component of the outreach in Ready To Learn. In addition to the Ready To Learn implementation funds, PBS pays for each station to receive 300 children's books per month. The PBS Ready To Learn Subcontract Agreement states that: "The station will distribute a monthly allotment of free children's books to children from low-income families with book dates provided by Ready To Learn." Currently, books are obtained through the First Book Program. Coordinators place the book orders and distribute the books to children. They are required to distribute the books primarily to children in low-income families, to try to give most of the books to the same children over time, and to integrate book distribution into their Ready To Learn program through workshops. Although PBS supplies 300 books per month, stations have the option of purchasing additional books at the same discounted rate. Nearly two-thirds of the Coordinators (65 percent) reported that they distributed in excess of the required 300 books per month, ranging from 300 to nearly 2,600 (see Figure V.2).

Figure V.2: Stations' Reported Monthly Distribution of Children's Books



SOURCE: **Site visits to PBS member stations and interviews with key Ready To Learn program staff.**

SAMPLE SIZE: 20 stations.

Most Coordinators viewed the distribution of books to children as critical to their outreach efforts. In several cases, Coordinators reported that they tried to increase workshop attendance by placing special emphasis on the fact that free children's books would be distributed at workshops. Several Coordinators or their partners reported using books as leverage to get people to return beyond the first session in multi-session workshops.

Partners Key to Children's Book Distribution

We found that Coordinators relied on a few methods to distribute children's books, primarily through their partners. Most Coordinators gave the books as part of a workshop to parents, child care providers, and teachers, as did their partners; although one Coordinator had some partners who were involved only to distribute books, not in conjunction with workshops. Three Coordinators had established formal First Book partnerships that involved the partner both facilitating workshops and distributing children's books. Four Coordinators also distributed books through large community events that their stations sponsored.

We asked Coordinators whether the same children received books over time. In most cases, Coordinators did not distribute children's books to the same people—they gave them to whomever attended a workshop or provided books to partners who might not see the same people over time. Only seven stations indicated that the same children received books over time. We were unsure whether Coordinators found it difficult to target the same group for books over time, or if they were unaware of the First Book requirements. One Coordinator reported that she was not aware of this provision until she attended her first annual Ready To Learn Professional Development seminar.

Distribution of *PBS Families,* and its Spanish language counterpart, *PBS para la Familia* is another component of Ready To Learn outreach. Each issue of the bi-annual magazine covers a single topic and describes activities and games to do with children, parenting tips, and episodes of PBS television programs appropriate for different aged children. Each station receives a set number of magazines in English and Spanish and distributes them during workshops or in regular mailings. The magazine is also available on the internet. Coordinators did not seem to view the magazine as an independent component of their outreach, but instead as supplemental educational material. Stations distributed between 500 and 35,000 copies of *PBS Families* and between 0 and 5,000 copies of *PBS para la Familia* per issue.

Community Events Were a Popular Way to Promote Ready To Learn

Along with the primary Ready To Learn outreach (workshops and distribution of children's books), most stations also hosted large community events. All but two stations were involved in hosting events for people in their communities. These events were venues to promote many different station activities, including Ready To Learn. Often, Ready To Learn materials and information about services were displayed, and these events tended to involve Ready To Learn partners.

Most stations were pleased with the success and popularity of these events. Large numbers of people attended the events—ranging from 100 to 30,000. One Coordinator reported that she felt these venues were a better way than workshops to extend the reach of Ready To Learn, and that she planned to increase her emphasis on large events in the future. Generally, Coordinators felt that large events were a good way to let the community know about Ready To Learn.

Coordinators Planned to Expand Ready To Learn

All Coordinators hoped to improve their outreach, many in several ways. In a broad sense, all the plans that Coordinators mentioned can be construed as expanding their program in some way. Coordinators from 10 stations indicated that they wanted to expand their programs, either through hiring additional staff or by increasing the number of workshops delivered or children's books distributed. Related to program expansion were plans to increase or improve partnerships. Nine stations indicated that their plans for the future involved strengthening partnerships, pursuing more partnerships, or developing

partnerships with different organizations. For many of these stations, new partnerships were the way Coordinators hoped to reach underserved populations. Three stations were interested in increasing the number of community events, three were interested in increasing funding, and three wanted to expand workshop content to cover additional areas.[3]

Customized local interstitials—educational video breaks to run between programs—were another form of outreach stations were beginning to explore. Three stations had done so already, and two others had plans and/or funding to do so in the near future. Stations had a variety of reasons for making their own interstitials. Staff from one station mentioned that they produced their own interstitials partly because the PBS-produced interstitials were "too vague" and lacked concrete educational messages that were useful to parents or child care providers. Others said that they were satisfied with PBS's interstitials but wanted to focus their messages on specific activities that the stations were doing. A few staff members indicated that station identity was important. One felt that PBS's branding practices on interstitials made customizing the interstitial for the station difficult (either the PBS logo was too large or the space for the local logo too small, and in scenes with a great deal of motion in the background the station logo looked "clunky").

Summary

- **Coordinators offered more workshops than required, and most served equivalent proportions of parents, teachers, and child care providers.** As we found in the baseline Coordinator survey, Coordinators in our sample provided many more than the required number of workshops, especially those from large- and medium-size stations. A few Coordinators conducted workshops that were attended primarily by subsets of parents, teachers, and child care providers; and a few Coordinators had some workshops specifically for children.

- **Most workshops were offered in a single session that lasted about 90 minutes.** In a few cases, Coordinators offered child care providers more intensive (longer and, sometimes, multiple-session) workshops than they offered parents.

- **Many Coordinators did not offer workshops in languages other than English, but those that did had the largest non-English-speaking populations.** Coordinators with the greatest need for workshops in other languages were able to offer them; but several expressed concern that they were not serving some of their target populations optimally. They wanted more information on how to serve these groups (children with special needs were a particular concern).

[3]Because Coordinators mentioned multiple plans, the number of stations does not add to 20.

- **Distributing children's books and hosting large community events were the other mainstays of Coordinators' outreach efforts.**

CHAPTER VI

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

The primary goal of Ready To Learn is to help prepare children to succeed in school. To reach this goal, Ready To Learn Coordinators teach parents, child care providers, and teachers how to use children's television programs to extend children's learning. During workshops, facilitators share how to use television to encourage literacy and media skills in children. An important aspect of our site visits was to find out from Ready To Learn Coordinators, staff, and partners what they perceived to be the effects of Ready To Learn on each type of workshop participant recipient (parents, child care providers, and teachers) and children cared for by workshop participants. Our visits also informed us of any methods Coordinators used to evaluate Ready To Learn at their station.

Coordinators Expected Parents to Read More to Their Children

Coordinators reported a number of benefits they believe parents get from attending Ready To Learn workshops and receiving program materials, such as children's books, *PBS Families* and *PBS para la Familia* magazines, and other information about literacy and television viewing. Most Coordinators indicated that parents who participate in Ready To Learn workshops were more likely to monitor their children's television viewing, to read more to their children, and to spend more time with their children. Two Coordinators reported that the program unintentionally helped parents with limited English proficiency to improve their own reading and speaking skills. One Coordinator shared a story about a parent who was inspired to attend an adult literacy program so that he would be able to read the book he received during a Ready To Learn outreach event to his child. Overall, the range of outcomes that Coordinators, staff, and partners expected for parents included:

- Monitoring children's television viewing, including the amount and the content
- Reading more to children

- Spending more time with children
- Engaging in active television viewing with children (asking questions about what has been viewed) and more co-viewing
- Viewing and using television as a learning tool
- Becoming more aware of the importance of books and reading
- Increasing the number of books in the home
- Realizing how important parents are to their children's education
- Improving their English-speaking skills (for populations with limited ability to speak English)

Coordinators Expected Teachers and Providers to View Television as a Learning Tool

Overall, most Coordinators reported and expected outcomes for child care providers and teachers that were similar to those for parents. Coordinators felt that child care providers and teachers were more likely to read to their children after participating in a workshop. One child care provider we spoke to, who had recently participated in a Ready To Learn workshop, said that the workshop made her change the way she viewed television. Before Ready To Learn, she viewed television as a way of quieting her children during rest period. Now she reports viewing television as a learning resource and is starting to incorporate Ready To Learn concepts into her daily activities with the children.

Coordinators Expected Children to Develop a Positive Attitude Toward Reading and Books

Coordinators most often reported that Ready To Learn helps children develop a positive attitude toward reading and books. As one Coordinator stated, "the program puts books into the hands of children, some of whom have never had a book of their own." Most of the Coordinators to whom we spoke believed that children would be likely to read more often as a result of Ready To Learn. In addition, Coordinators said that they expected children to develop better television viewing habits, to be more selective about what they watch, and to watch less television overall. One Coordinator suggested that as a result of Ready To Learn, children would watch more public television. And, finally, a few Coordinators expressed their belief that Ready To Learn would help improve children's vocabulary.

Coordinators Did Little Participant Follow-up

Although most Coordinators expected that Ready To Learn would have many positive effects for those who participated in the workshops and other outreach events, none of those we spoke with followed up with participants to see if they actually practice the View-Read-Do triangle taught during the workshops. If there was any follow-up after workshops, it was in the form of mailings of educational materials. Several Coordinators reported that they send mailings to all workshop participants for six months to a year after they attend a workshop. Other Coordinators indicated that they followed up with workshop hosts to see if participants need additional books or other Ready To Learn materials. However, none of the Coordinators we spoke with were able to tell us how often they expected parents or child care providers to practice the View-Read-Do model after attending a workshop.

EVALUATION RESULTS FROM STATIONS

Coordinators Used Participant Feedback to Improve Workshop Quality

Although few Coordinators conducted any long- or short-term followup with workshop participants, most of the Coordinators we talked with reported using participant feedback at workshops to monitor and improve the quality of their own workshops. Coordinators from 80 percent of the stations (16 out of 20) indicated that they used written evaluation forms to obtain participant feedback about workshops. Out of those Coordinators, most reported using the feedback to improve the structure and content of their workshops.

Several Coordinators showed us the evaluation form they used in their workshops. Most Coordinators created their own evaluation form; only a few reported adapting a form that had been created for another purpose. For the most part, the evaluation forms were similar with regard to the questions asked of the participants. The majority of the Coordinators asked workshop participants to tell them what they liked and disliked about the workshop, what aspect or issue stood out for them, the quality of the materials used during the workshop, and any suggestions they had for ways to improve the workshops. Most Coordinators asked participants to anonymously fill out the forms immediately after the workshops.

Overall, Coordinators reported that participants responded positively on the evaluation forms. According to several Coordinators, participants reported that they were pleased with the workshop materials, indicating that they would be able to practice the concepts they learned during the workshop at home or in their classroom. Many Coordinators also told us that most participants expressed shock when they heard the statistics about how much television children watch, and that they resolved to start monitoring their children's viewing habits. Also, according to a number of Coordinators, participants reported that they enjoyed the interactive format of the workshops.

Coordinators received constructive feedback but also experienced difficulties with workshop evaluation. One said that she originally conducted her workshops more like a

lecture, until several participants suggested that she talk less. In one case, a Coordinator reported that some immigrant populations had great difficulty filling out the evaluation forms. She described the problem as having both cultural and literacy underpinnings. Although the forms had been translated, the questions were too difficult for many to answer in writing. Also, she believed that cultural lack of familiarity with filling out forms created mistrust about the way in which the information would be used. Other Coordinators reported that they collected the evaluation forms but did not enter them into a database because they did not know how to analyze the information. Several Coordinators indicated that they need additional training in this area.

Summary

- **Most Coordinators felt that program recipients benefited positively from participating in Ready To Learn workshops.** The outcomes most often cited by Coordinators centered on literacy and television viewing behaviors. The Coordinators we spoke with believe that participation in Ready To Learn results in parents reading more to their children, providers and teachers using television as a learning tool in the classroom, and children developing a positive attitude toward reading and books.

- **It is difficult to verify expected outcomes because the information is anecdotal.** Despite this, Coordinators do use written evaluation forms to measure participant satisfaction with workshops, which informs Coordinators about how they might alter the structure and content of their workshops to improve participant satisfaction.

CHAPTER VII

IMPLEMENTATION LESSONS

Based on our site visits and interviews, we developed lessons for Ready To Learn implementation. These lessons focus on strengthening stations' commitment to Ready To Learn, developing and maintaining strong community partnerships, and improving the ways in which Coordinators provide outreach.

LESSONS FOR STATIONS

Station Commitment Is Important. A number of Coordinators reported that Ready To Learn is only as strong as the stations' commitment to carry out the goals of the program. According to one Coordinator, if a station is not 100 percent committed to making the program work, then it will not be successful. Over the years, Coordinators reported learning how to work with their stations in ways that help strengthen the station's support and commitment to Ready To Learn. Many Coordinators felt that it is important to learn how to work with the strengths of the station, and to seek out people within a station who will help promote Ready To Learn. Other Coordinators suggested building a Ready To Learn team, consisting of staff from key station departments, such as programming and promotion. The best-funded Ready To Learn programs we visited had regular contact with staff from their development (fundraising) departments. In some stations, development staff would attend Ready To Learn events, in order to be better able to talk about the things the program did with potential funders.

Work to Reduce Coordinator Turnover. Coordinators told us about the importance of personal relationships, both inside the station and with outside partners. Therefore, Coordinator turnover may be detrimental to Ready To Learn program operations, because each new Coordinator will have to establish these relationships anew. This was likely the case in many of the stations we visited. In half of them, the original Coordinator had left, (in three cases the Coordinators left their positions in the few months since our visits). About five of the Coordinators now in place in the stations we visited have been in their jobs less than one year.

Although the reasons vary, stations can nevertheless work to reduce disruptions related to Coordinator turnover. One approach is to keep open the lines of communication with PBS's Ready To Learn Department. By keeping PBS informed when new Coordinators are hired, and using the services available for them, station management can ease the transition for new Coordinators. Two relevant services are mentoring and "newcomer" orientation sessions, both of which can help new Coordinators become acclimated to their positions.

Another approach to preventing turnover that stations might consider is to provide reliable assistance for Coordinators. These positions need not be paid or even permanent. Additional help could reduce demand on Coordinator time for clerical duties (such as making packets of materials to mail or for workshops), which could decrease turnover.

LESSONS FOR PARTNERSHIPS

Make the Development of Partnerships a Priority. In many of the stations we visited, Coordinators identified partnerships as important to being able to accomplish outreach. Partners were a way to access target populations, provide facilitators to conduct workshops, store and distribute children's books, donate space to hold workshops, and recruit participants for the workshops. Coordinators may benefit from developing additional partnerships or strengthening existing ones.

Building strong partnerships means maintaining regular contact with partners, promoting the work of the partner (the relationship should work both ways), and following up with partners after workshops. Several Coordinators reported that they built on the relationships their station already had, and that, once successful, they were able to begin other partnerships with organizations not previously affiliated with their station.

Create Multiple Roles for Partners. Coordinators who were most satisfied with their partnerships created a range of roles that partners could fill. Most had a mixture of formal and informal partnerships, and they allowed partner organizations to select roles that were most comfortable for them. Partnerships that required the most from partners worked best when expectations were spelled out formally. Verbal agreements seemed to work best for partners who donated space or who helped recruit participants but who were not expected to actually plan and facilitate their own workshops.

Extend Outreach Through Partnerships. Other Coordinators stressed that working through partners was a great way to increase the number of people served. In addition, partnering was a popular way to recruit target populations for workshops, since, in many cases, partners had already established relationships with these groups. For example, several Coordinators noted that they would not have been able to work with children with special needs without the assistance of partners who served these children.

LESSONS FOR OUTREACH

Prepare, Yet Be Flexible When Conducting Workshops. Coordinators told us that it helped them greatly to learn as much possible about participants, their needs, and their expectations before conducting a workshop. Some Coordinators had developed information sheets on which to record such information and which they could fill out when someone called to request a workshop. Others who worked mainly with partners advocated relying on their partners to be familiar with the group they were serving in workshops.

Even careful preparation cannot anticipate all situations, however; being ready to change plans in response to participants' reactions may also be important. Several Coordinators told us about times when they had changed either the way they were conducting a workshop or the content, based on a "reading" of audience reaction.

Organization Is Important. Coordinators must manage diverse responsibilities with limited resources. Most schedule, advertise, prepare materials for workshops, plan the workshops, and facilitate them. And, getting to the workshop may entail a great deal of travel. In addition, they often maintain mailing lists, track book orders for multiple partners, distribute children's books, complete PBS reporting forms, train facilitators, and develop and maintain partnerships. Coordinators stressed that, to do their jobs well, organizational skills are important. To keep workshop content fresh, some recommended keeping a file of workshop ideas, reading PBS materials, and contacting other Coordinators. Others talked about the databases they had developed to keep track of completed workshops, the content covered, and people attending the workshops—all aimed at making the reporting requirements easier. Still others tried to limit workshops to particular days, so they would have enough uninterrupted time in the office to perform their administrative and clerical duties. Although different methods work for different people, Coordinators emphasized that it was important to ask for help when needed and to resist the idea that they have to know everything.

Consider Hiring Facilitators or Arranging for Them Through Partnerships. Coordinators could increase the number of workshops offered (which many indicated they wanted to do), by training more facilitators. Facilitators were instrumental in increasing the number of workshops stations were able to offer. One advantage of having partners facilitate workshops could be better coverage of large geographic areas. By recruiting facilitators from strategic locations, Coordinators could reduce the travel time required. Small stations that cannot afford to pay facilitators might investigate partnerships, in which, for example, the partner organizations would facilitate workshops in exchange for children's books to distribute.

Think About Outcomes. Coordinators might increase the effectiveness of their workshops by thinking concretely about the changes they hope to achieve with parents, child care providers, teachers—and, ultimately, children. We noted that many Coordinators and their partners had difficulty answering our questions about the changes they expected, based on their workshops and other forms of outreach. In addition, few told us that they had in mind a frequency of practicing the View-Read-Do model that would be effective; and few

recommended such a frequency to workshop participants. Thinking about desirable outcomes could help Coordinators, one, sharpen the focus of workshops, and, two, place optimal emphasis on specific components. One simple step that might be effective would be to stress a frequency with which participants should use the learning triangle with the children in their care.

Workshop Breadth Versus Depth. Clear tensions within Ready To Learn are the competing desires to reach the greatest number of people possible (breadth), and to effect the most beneficial change in those who participate in workshops (depth). From our visits, we drew no clear recommendation or lesson. Most Coordinators offered as many workshops as they were able; and they did so by giving relatively short, single sessions. Given the limited strength of the intervention, we would expect the changes that could occur among participants to be more diffuse and less dramatic than if participants were to attend longer sessions or sessions offered over time. However, persuading people to attend workshops at all was a challenge in many stations. Increasing the demands on participants may also increase the difficulty for Coordinators to fill the seats.

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